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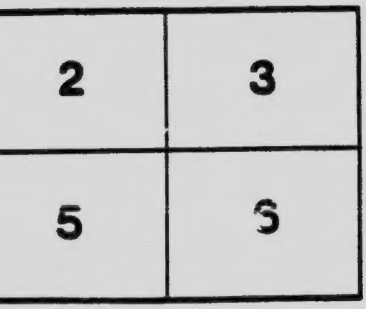

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR'S FORTHCOMING VOLUME ON THE ORIGIN, SIGNIFICATION, TRANSLATION, CLASSIFICATION AND ETYMOLOGY OF PROPER-NAMES

By Mr. C. BAILLAIRGE

To be read before section II of the Royal Society of Canada at its May meeting at Toronto, Ont., 1902.

In 1871, Mgr. Tanguay published a work in 7 volumes a " Genealogical dictionary of Canadian Families ", with, at the beginning of the 1st volume, some remarks on the etymology and history of proper-names.

His insufficient acquaintance with the english language caused him sometimes to consider as onomatopoeias or homonyms certain names which are by no means of such a class.

Thus he gives *dragoon* as an english translation of the name *D'Aragon* an ancient province of Spain, while *dragoon* is from the french *dragon*, italian *dragone*, danish and swedish *dragan*, latin *dracomarius*.

Tanguay derives collier (charbonnier) from *Coleman* while *cole* has not the meaning of *coal*, but that of the german or dutch *cohl*, a cabbage, (Webster).

Again at the word or name *Magnan* which he translates into *chaudronnier* boiler maker, *magnan* is the popular name in the middle of France for the silk worm, while *magnier* says Littré has the meaning which Tanguay would give to *Magnan*.

Now we have Donaldson which Tanguay derives from *D'Alençon*, a town of France, as if the homonymy or similarity of sound were conclusive of the fact. On the contrary the true derivation of Donaldson is self evident : a son of Donald or McDonald. To mention but one more of the errors of the learned abbé, we find at *Berthiaume* that he derives this name from the Saxon or Scandinav. *bert* brilliant, illustrious and from *helm* saxon (: helmet.) But the celebrity of any head-gear can hardly be supposed to confer the same renown on the wearer. The error here is of mistaking *helm* for *heim* german and dutch, saxon *ham*, danish *heim* which signifies a hamlet, a house, a residence, a home ; and hence the termination *hamme* or *iamme* of the name under consideration *Berthiaume* —with the meaning of one at the head of a princely mansion, a house celebrated for its hospitality, etc, or that the man himself was known as liberal and generous ; and to this day, a representative of the name in Canada, he who generously fitted out an expedition last year, to test the practicability of winter navigation of the St. Lawrence, proves that there is or may be something in a name.

It is in no way however, for the purpose of signalizing or commenting on such errors, that the writer has undertaken the composition of the work to which this introduction is intended as a preface. It is on the contrary, because he considers this etymological chapter of the Revd. Abbé's work of extreme interest, and because the " dictionary ", on account of its cost, is likely to reach but a very few of the community, that he has thought it advisable in a less expensive form to put readers in the way of looking into the origin, the why and wherefore of the present family name or appellation of each of them.

The writer would add that he deems himself fortunate that no one has had the idea of forestalling him in this etymological enquiry into the origin of words and names, which has always been to him a labor of love, while tiding over such moments of leisure as his studies and writings on engineering and scientific subjects have left him for the purpose.

In 1824, one Salvestre, a french author and from whom Mgr. Tanguay quotes at length, published a work in two octavo volumes on this subject of the origin and etymology of proper and family names.

" Mr. Salvestre says that of all the modes of distinguishing an individual, the most natural is to give him a name recalling his qualities physical or mental, as the *big* or *little*, *tall* or *short*, the *fair* or *brown*, the *good* or *handsome*. "

Such are also the names of colours, of creatures of the earth's fauna, the trees and flowers of its flora—of workers at the arts and industries and of the tools and materials made use of. We also have names expressive of structures of all kinds and of the component portions thereof. Certain names are suggestive of comestibles, articles of furniture, of dress, of domestic implements.

The several soils or varieties thereof more or less suitable to horticultural, agricultural requirements, are also rehearsed in the names of many men. There are names biblical and names clerical, astronomical, meteorological, as well as those expressive of coins, weights and measures ; and the vast family of names topographical or of towns, cities, rivers, lakes lords, etc, with others indicative of the nationality of the individual.

On this head, says Salvestre we know not with any certainty, either what the original sense was of such names of places, or to what extent the name may have been altered, as well from the desire of attaching it to some religious legend, to some historical tradition, or through lapse of time. Then, how can we say whether the names belonged originally to physical objects rather than to real personages, the human species.

A thousand names may be mentioned of which the meaning or signification applies equally to a man or to a flower, a rock, etc. A man has often adopted the name of a place or given his name to a locality and it is more especially in the United States of America that the truth of this assertion becomes palpable. The occurrence is moreover rendered probable and even certain from the fact that most proper names have originated centuries ago in the mother country, and that in emigrating to America a new or theretofore supposed to be a new or as yet undiscovered and uninhabited country, where places had not previously been named except may be in a few cases, in the indian or aboriginal vernacular, topographical points had to be named for the purpose of identification—hence it is we find the names of individuals as Adams, Evans, etc. with a list of suffixes attached indicative of the object named as Adams'ville, Adams'creek, Adams'ford, Evans'town, Evansfield, Evansborough, with a hundred other such suffixes or terminations as cliff, mountain, haven, port, bridge, landing, burg, ham, dorf, cape, brook, lake etc., etc. —and thus also perpetuating their names or handing them down to posterity.

Let us rather, says Salvestre, fall back on history : *Cyrus*, it is said, was nursed by a goat, *Romulus* by a wolf, the persian *Archaemenes* by an eagle.

The legend that Saint *René*, rose from the dead or came to life again some 7 years after his death has no other foundation than that the verb *renaît* (comes to life again) was under the synonymy or similarity of sound *renaît* expressive of such a fact, or had thus become a pious or religious legend of the time. But it does not follow that *René* is a mythical or mysterious being.

And while on this head we may, remark that *Tiernay* may possibly be a make up of *petit* and *René* the name having by usage and frequent repetition become " tit René ", and finally and onomatopeically written or as pronounced *Tiernay* ; in the same way as the french word *quêrir* or *querir* to fetch, by contraction or elision became *qu'rir* and finally *cri*, or as the word *cheminée* carelessly spoken, has given rise to its being written *chaniée*.

We can not however conclude or from the sole fact of the apparent evidence of the thing that such and such a name is a nickname, since the english name *Good enough* has its homonym in the russian *Godonof* and may have derived from it in case where the russian married an englishwoman whose children reared in the english idiom would naturally pronounce it so and come to write it as pronounced ; and if the individual had been guilty of any misdeed, he would but favor such a transformation as an *alias* likely to be beneficial to him.

We have here in Canada the *Enouf* family (a french name) and that also of the english *Enough* and yet one can hardly doubt but what both names are of one and the same origin, without the possibility, of course, of asserting which of the two derives from the other, and either supposition would bring about the metamorphosis to wit : the frenchman becoming allied to an old country wife, or the englishman to a woman of french descent—the children in the former case pronouncing *Enough* for *Enouf* and in the latter *Enouf* for *Enough*, or the transformation may have been effected centuries ago in the old world and in the very same manner.

Nor can it be doubted, we believe, that all such names as here in Canada terminate in *et* and in *ot* and originally and still in France pronounced *é* and *o* as in *Brunet, Audet, Turcot, Jeannot*, have acquired the duplication of their respective finales from this intermarrying of french and english, when the children generally of the mother tongue persuasion, being in the habit of pronouncing *ette* for *et*, *otte* for *ot* have converted the names into Audette, Frenette, Turcotte, Jeannotte.

To relegate to the same class of mysterious entities, as René, continues Salvestre, the third king of the French, will it suffice to rememorate that while his mother was bathing at the sea side, he was sired by a marine bull, while Mezeray informs us that this absurd tradition has its origin in the fact of an incorrect translation of *Mérvais* into *Meruvich*, a marine calf.

" One of the Massodian chiefs, called *Loup* (wolf) greek *Lycos* had assumed the christian name *Pelcos* Peter whence his sectarians were styled " Lycopetrians ". The french word *loup* is also a flower and the *lycos* which bears the flowers gathered by St. Athanasius at the monastery, led to the legend that the messenger was a *loup*, a wolf.

Roman laws, says Salvestre, have always borne or went under the name of the magistrate or legislator who had been instrumental in their enactment.

Severe or orthodox philologists, continues he, forbid the introduction of two idioms in an etymology ; but in this, says Salvestre, they are wrong, the existence of the fact overruling such authority. The mixture of peoples by intermarriage has produced mixture of words. During the latter days, says he, of the " Bas-Empire ", how many words were there not, made up of others borrowed from the latin as well from the idioms of allied peoples—whether subjects or enemies. The Celtic tongue has thus combined with the Saxon and Latin. The dictionaries of idioms spoken in France and England during the middle ages, supply numerous examples of this and such as to allow of finding traces of such components to this very day in both languages french and english as now improved and rendered so to say perfect or at least comparatively so ; half-breed words so to say as Juliodunum, Augustodunum—the latin Julianus, Augustus with *dunum* (latin) one or Celtic *tun* or *don* (mountain)—*Polis* greek and *castellum* latin—*Morhault* where *mor* is the celtic for (mer, mare) sea, *hault* saxon *wold* direct, govern : *Commander of the sea.*

" *Theodlind* or *Theudelind* from *theot* multitude, nation, *lind* handsome : the belle par excellence (as, the belle of the ball) the handsomest, prettiest of the nation. Again a mixture of the *teuton* and *spanish*, *Nanthild* whom Dagobert forced from her convent to marry her, from the celtic *Nant* a ravine, a tiny torrent, a brook and *hild* or *child* in teuton a child : *child of the torrent.*—Chateaubriant, *château* (french) and *bryan* a king or chief : the king's castle, or that of the chief—*Nichelands* (an article of clothing from the latin *nichel* or *nihil* (nothing) : nothing on the back, a vestment which only covered the stomach and sides.

After the recital of such names, so differently composed of various words and idioms, it will be inferred that the proposed study of proper-names is by no means an idle one. The part or roll which proper or family names play in the existence of individuals and peoples or nations, shows the utility of the study thereof, their affinity with every branch of historical erudition.

Yes, the name of a personage maintains the imprint of the country and sometimes of the age wherein he lived. The name of a country recalls its position, its physical aspect—the name of a city lead back to the epoch of its foundation, to the usages, habits, religious beliefs, or to a trait in the history of the people who laid its foundations or established it in times gone by in a foreign land. *Andalousia* from *Andalou* a son of Japhet : while such a name is from *Vandales* Vandals who conquered the country (eliminating the initial letter *V*).

Chlovis paleness, *Euphrosin* gayety were not primarily proper names ; but may have become so since. *Jerusalem* from *salem* peace.

Moses whose name is from *withdrawn*, is he who withdrew from Egypt the people of God. *Metomasti* emigrated—*Abtos* wandering—*DePourceaugnac* a creation of Molière—*Demos* people, democrat—*Mary* sadness, sorrow, bitterness with which was overcome at the time of the birth of *Moses* his eldest sister, the Israelites being then bent under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Rachel expiring while giving birth, to a son had called him *Benoni* son of my sorrow, or son of my suffering ; Jacob called him *Benjamin* son of the right, of the mighty—*Maximus Annolis* was so called from his having determined the number of years a man's age must be to admit of his pretending to any charge or position. The golden collar *Torques* torn by *Manlius* from the Gaul who wore it, gained for him the name of *Torquatus*. The conquest of *Fidenes* by Lucius Sergius earned for him the name of *Fidenas* and that of *Messala* given to Valerius perpetuated the remembrance of the conquest of *Messina*.

Statues and trophies have perished under the scythe of time : the names of *Africanus, Asiaticus* acquired by valor live in posterity.

Among the Hebrews, the first people that existed, the name of a grand parent was often given to a child, or that of one of his nearest relatives bestowed on him, or the name given him was the circumstances accompanying his birth, or from the first words uttered by his mother, his father or any one else in laying eyes upon him.

This habit has led to the abuse of bestowing the name of *Moses* on Pharao's daughter because she had saved or withdrawn him from the waters, where he had been put to perish—*Barnabas* means *son of consolation*. The father of the cherished spouse of Mahomet *Abou-Bekr* is the *father of the young virgin*—Joanna, Joannes, John.

Among the Arabs and Israelites, the names of women were expressive of their qualities : the name of the first wife of Jacob means the *love of work* and *Noemi* signifies the *splendor* of *beauty*—*Susan* is a *brilliant flower* and *Cethura* exhales the odour of aromatics—*Aroun Abraschid* is *the just, the right*—Matavakhel called his wife *ugly*, for the pleasure or satisfaction every time he saw her, of belying such ugliness by the splendor of her charms—which reminds one also of the word of Hippolytus in Phèdre :

" depuis deux ans entiers chaque jour je la vois, et crois toujours la voir pour la première fois."

The emperor N[illegible]d Djéhanguyr had called his wife *Nour Nathal*, light of the harem; he thereafter called her *light of the world*.

Among the T[illegible] and Persians the name of a corporal or physical defect or deformity, as the *hunch back*, the *lame*, the *one eyed* or *blind of* an *eye* were constantly used on the addresses of letters as an identification of those to whom the letters were addressed. Such is in the Ottoman empire all that serves to designate an individual from one of the lowest grade to the Grand Vizir himself.

The Greeks, like the Scandinavians, come near the invention of family names but do not reach it. Among all peoples with but few exceptions, family names have remained unknown. As with the Chinese the name of the father is transmitted to or inherited by the child, male or female, and in Japan the right obtains of depriving a child of his father's name, if he has been guilty of any misdeed. Women's prenomens or surnames in Japan are generally borrowed from flowers, such true emblems of beauty, its splendor and also of its ephemeral existence.

Roman names, says Salvestre, the only ones which we know perfectly, are also the only ones of which we can attempt to solve the problem of their origin. We shall then, says he, be able to do this for the whole of Italy whence Romans have derived their names. All such names are from *us* transformed into *ius*: *Marcus Marcius, Tullus Tullius*, etc. To express *son* the Italians used to say, for the son of *Posthumus, Posthumius* as in english we say *Evander's* sword Peterson's arc or by elision or contraction Peter's arrow. For names already terminated in *ius* a syllable was added as *Publius* became *Publilius, Manlius Manilius, Servus Servilius*.

In granting to freed men or slaves, the right of bearing his name, the wealthy and powerful no doubt believed that they were merely conferring on them a mark of subordination, one of some sort of dependency, or of clients. By so doing, on the contrary, they were conferring on them a title of equality which it merely was dependent on time to render available, or of value to them, with the result that when the republic foundered, the barbarians assumed the titles of the vanquished.

Over the debris of the Romans came the Franks in the Gaul's, the Saxons in England—in Spain and Italy, the Goths and Lombards, etc.

Then came Christianism which subjugated Rome. St. Gregory the Great in the 6th Century, instituted what we now call christian or baptismal names. This edict was but slowly and unwillingly obeyed. During even the 10th and 11th centuries the names of St. Hughes, Robert, Henry and even St. Charles were as yet unknown; and St. Louis (bishop) was less known than St-Louis (king).

But the perseverance of the chiefs or heads of creed, worship or religion were to come out triumphant.

For years, people put off till the hour of death their baptism. Their theory and practice was to live a jolly life and then get christened. The church condemned this practice, this conduct or behaviour of men who were only willing to renounce vice or a sinful life in renouncing life itself. Even during the 12th century men were still called *Ulysses, Hercules, Turnus, Theseus*, etc.

It is in 1225, says Salvestre, that the germanic languages began to be written in latin characters. In 1387, adds he, the great, the warriors were separately baptised or christened; but the people were divided into groups. The priests baptised at once an entire group or troop conferring on the whole the same name. In the one all the names of males were *Peter* and of the females or women *Catherine*; of another, the men were *Paul* and the women *Margaret* and so on.

Is this why there are at present so many persons of like name—our directories or almanacks showing that even in such a city as Quebec with a population of less than 100,000 souls there are as many as 150 times the same name though all pertaining to different families, and distinguishable only from one another by their trades and callings.

Hence the addition of a second prenomen, surname or christian name at the time of confirmation; and again at baptism a third and a fourth and fifth name, the better to enable one individual to be distinguished from another and thus allow of doing proportionate justice to all either by the father of a family, a court of justice, or a life insurance company where so many *aliases* are attempted for fraudulent purposes, and for many other reasons.

Salvestre was of opinion that there should be but one prenomen and this, distinctive from all others for each individual and that this should be made compulsory by law; as otherwise man would never stand against the tyranny of usage or custom. Where the thing possible or practical, it would be right, but it is absolutely impossible, impractical, and here our author of 75 years ago is erring in this that never could names be found sufficient for the purpose, except by the invention of new names to allow of every one having a different appellation. Again though, it must be said that with the many different ways of spelling the same name, without materially altering its sound or homonymy, the difficulty may be and is got over (see chapter II of the proposed volume, under the heading "Names differently spelled)" and that without affecting the sound or onomatopeism of the word to the extent of falling under the ban of the law, which does not allow of a man's changing his name, and this under the wise provision for preventing rogues from an escape from justice, by assuming another name, an *alias* so called, in the same way that one pleads an *alibi* to prove that one were not there when such and such an act was committed.

Let us again draw on Salvestre who tells us that family or proper names begin to date from the year 1400 and that in Russia even so late as 1585, a host of noble families were still without family or proper names.

Continuing our derivations as indicative of how names have been arrived at and suggestive of how others may be composed, or dissected to arrive at their origin, we have Humbertopule for son of Humbert and referring to this end to Mézeray, history of France 1101 to..... we find *Gienfighazzi, John son of Azy, Filangeri, Filius Angerii, Delphini, Dauphin* (*dolphin*) from a great facility for swimming.

Teutons indicate filiation or relationship of son to father by the suffix son, of which we have already given an example and at class XXVI of the vocabulary, we give in alphabetical order nearly 200 names of this kind. Hence so many names of Swedish, Danish, German and English families ending in *son*: christian names transformed into family names by this addition or suffix *son, s, z, ez* in Spain: *Peters, Williams, Richards, Henriquez, Fernandez, Lopez*, or in France by using such a suffix as a prefix as *D'Andrée, Dejean, Depeyre*, etc.

Similarly in Italy names in the genitive become family names as *Falci* from *Falce, Jacobi* from *Jacob, Simonis* from Simon.

Placed between two names, the latin *ab* expresses descendence as *Rhys ab Evan, Son of Evan*. Custom has done away with the vowel and we say *Rhys-Evan* and made up in the same manner are the patronymic names *Bowen, Prydosrech, Price*, etc.

Many names are known in France which recall arts and trades as *Mercier, Meunier*, or *Meuier, Barbier, Boulanger, Couvreur*—All such names however exist in Canada, the bearer thereof having

come from Europe after the discovery of Canada by Jacques-Cartier more than three centuries ago. Hundreds of others of the same category will be found under class III of the work alluded to.

The name of the wife has been obtained by that of the husband as Everjeta from Everget, Augusta from Auguste or Augustus, Flavia from Flavius, Stratégofuline giving Stratégofuline, Bazin, Bazine, Panbyperséhasti, Panbyperséhaste. In such cases the husband's name becomes that of the family.

In Russia, daughter is designated by owna : *Alexandrowna* daughter of Alexander, Petrouna or Petrowna, Alexnowna.

With many tribes, with the Greeks, the Chinese, people change names. To the chinese a name is given after his death, when according to the belief of that people in metempsycosis, a man after death is supposed to have put on a new or different entity—the object being to render the man a stranger to his theretofore existence.

Dion is apparently from *Ion* and might be written D'Ion which also offers the occasion of remarking that our fellow Dionne—might also separate from his name by an apostrophy its initial D and write D'Ionne or rather D'Ion (unless to be sure the etymology be from Yonne a river, a dept. of France) for as to the diminutive final *ne* of Dionne it is probably due to the same cause which has transformed Audet and Jeannot pronounced Audé and Jeannot in France into Audette and Jeannotte as herein before explained.

There are all sorts of reasons for altering one's name. We have already mentioned some of them as when a man assumes an *alias* in case of a misdeed, to escape justice. Vanity is a factor, superstition, the desire of flattering the great ; but one of the most usual cases is when a member of a family either from superior education, talents, genius, has become well off or rich, and does not wish to be known as belonging to the poor family he has issued from ; or again when a member of the family has disgraced himself by the commission of a punishable offence, or has been condemned and jailed or executed, and others of the same name become desirious of an *alias*.

This we presume will suffice, as an earnest of that which will be treated on in the promised work on the " Origin of names " or as set forth in the heading to this introduction, and that it can not but be of interest and instructive to all those who may have any curiosity as to the why and wherefore of their appellation : for the book will be of several hundred pages, will contain in both languages, with the english version opposite the french, a classification of proper names under some 26 headings, their signification or meaning, their translation, their derivation or etymology with additional chapters on nick-names, names differently spelled, the significations of the several Greek, Latin, German Celtic, Arabian, Danish, Swedish and other roots, and a list and discussion of nick-names.

If it be asked why, being a member of section III, the author who has always professed and practised engineering and architecture, appears now to be entering on a subject foreign to said section, I must explain that having been in 1880 chosen as one of the foundation members of the Society, because in 1866 he had written a treatise on practical Geometry, in which the counsellors of the Marquis of Lorne, founder of the Society, must have found something worthy of notice, and that in 1874 he had been called to Europe there to be honored at the "Great Conservatory of Arts and Trades" for his new system of measuring all bodies by one and the same rule, and on the same occasion was the recipient of the gold medal founded by the baroness de Pages, for the most useful and meritorious invention or discovery of the year ; he in 1884 submitted for the appreciation of the section a paper under the heading of " Hints to Geometers for a new edition of Euclid " : a system which had it been made known in England, would have very considerably curtailed or by several months the study of the Greek Geometer, thus saving thousands of pounds sterling annually in the cost of the full course of studies, or in time to be devoted to the study of other sciences.

The author's paper was submitted for their appreciation to non-geometers, men who had never taught Euclid in their lives, and in fact who knew nothing of Euclid, absolutely nothing. They of course then could not see the philosophy of what the author proposed and a system which would have subserved the requirements of the masses of mankind, remained unedited and unheeded, it not having been considered of sufficient importance to be published in the yearly volume of the Society's transactions.

A 5th section or a committee of practical geometers would have been required to see the value of what the author proposed ; for as it is : of the four sections which make up the Society, the two first are literary : french and english, the fourth geological ; and the third has more to do than it can well handle in physics, mechanics, astronomy, chemistry, magnetism and electricity, meteorology and analytical mathematics.

Hence it is in a few words, that the author of this paper on the origin of proper-names, being debarred (by the action of referees who undertook to appreciate a subject they knew nothing about) from utilizing his aptitudes in geometry in a way which would have so effectually benefited mankind, thought he might be useful to his fellows and may-be to the world in general, in setting his hand at something else ; but which at any rate has always been to him a labor of love : that of a study of the origin and etymology of words or names where his knowledge of both languages would fit him for a translation of the characteristics expressed in each of them.

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